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Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Junior DJ Burns and senior Rod Thomas embrace after their final home game on Sunday, Feb. 26.

Basketball prepares for the 'madness'

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A win on senior night has set the path to madness for the Murray State men's basketball team. In a new conference, with a new championship on the line, the Racers are still looking to make it to the big dance.

The Racers defeated the Valparaiso Beacons on Sunday, Feb. 26, by a score of 77-76 in overtime, with fourth year junior forward DJ Burns leading the way for the Racers with 21 points and eight rebounds. The win locked in the Racers as the seventh seed for the MVC Tournament.

“The warmups were a surprise to me. It speaks to the love that Murray has as a community and that we try to express as a team.”

— **Rod Thomas,**
Senior Guard

Both Burns and senior guard Rob Thomas were honored for senior night before the game. Thomas scored the first points of the game in his first career start for the Racers, making a 3-pointer from the right wing.

The team wore warmups that read “In Rod We Trust” before the game to recognize Thomas, a walk-on for the Racers since his freshman year and a graduate of Paducah Tilghman High School.

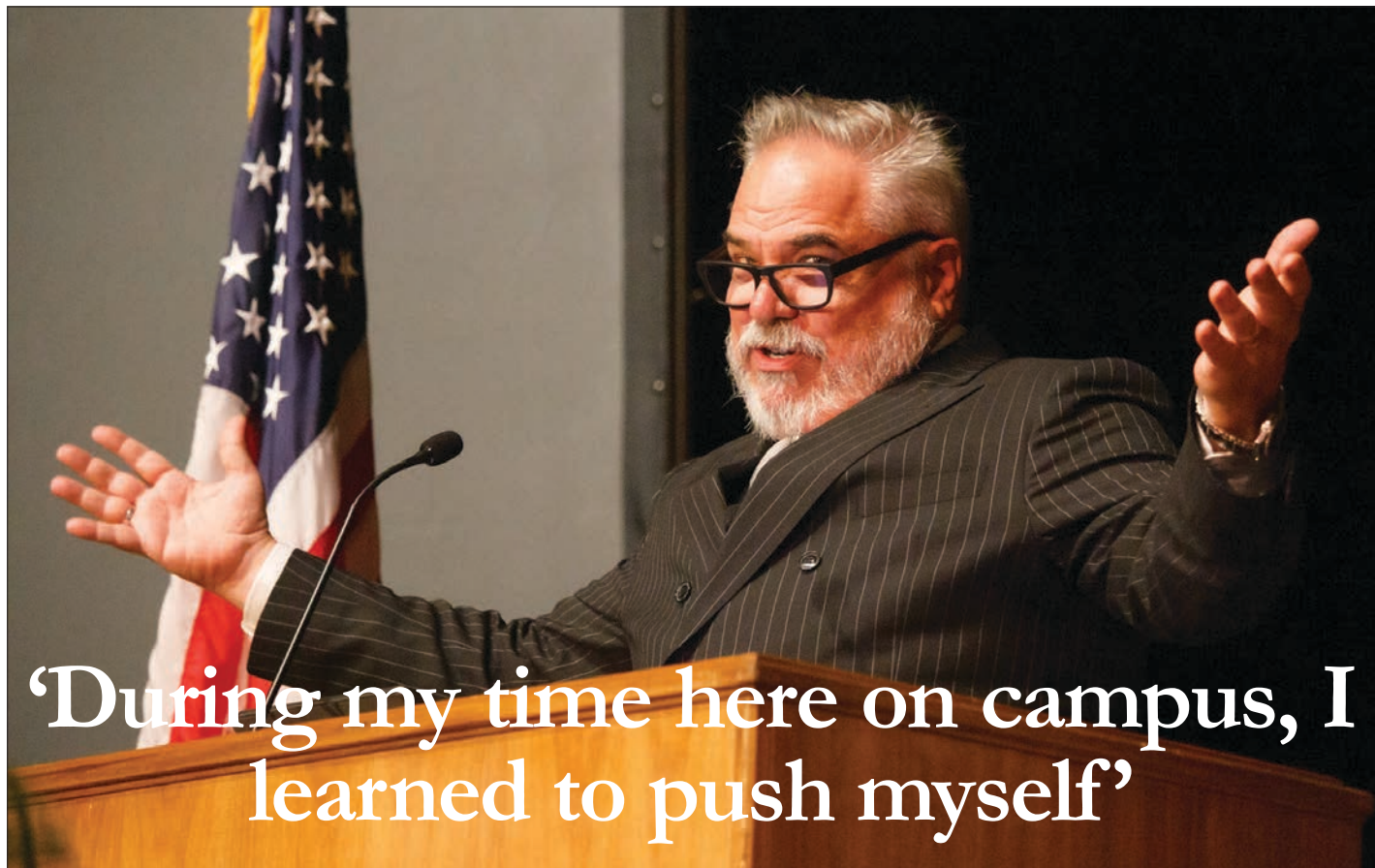
Thomas, a fan favorite at all of Murray State's home games, said his start was one of the best moments he's experienced at Murray State.

“The warmups were a surprise to me,” Thomas said. “It speaks to the love that Murray has as a community and that we try to express as a team. They love me unconditionally, and I love them back. This was huge for me, especially to end my career here, to win this game. It was huge. I'm just very grateful for this opportunity.”

It was the second time the Racers had played the Beacons this season, with both games ending as overtime wins for Murray State.

Burns spoke after the game about the win and how special it was to him. He said there was no other way he would have wanted to leave Murray State.

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Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Actor and Alumnus W. Earl Brown speaks about his education and career for the Presidential Lecture, which was postponed in 2022 and held on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Professional actor highlights his career for Presidential Lecture

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Actor and alumnus W. Earl Brown delivered the Centennial Presidential Lecture in Lovett Auditorium on Tuesday, Feb. 28 following the postponement of the event in 2022 because of winter weather.

Brown, a native of Golden Pond, Kentucky, chronicled his acting career from its beginnings at Murray State in the lecture he titled “A Racer Success Story.” He was involved in the theater and journalism departments before graduating in 1986.

He said he was glad to have the opportunity to speak in Lovett

Auditorium, which was under renovation at the time the lecture was supposed to take place.

“Don't get me wrong,” Brown said. “I love the CFSB Center, but it lacks the history and the gravitas of these walls.”

Brown said he enjoyed watching movies at the Cheri Theatres growing up, particularly “Animal House,” “Halloween” and the “Star Wars” films.

“Now, this was a time before even VHS tapes,” Brown said. “If you saw a movie, you saw it in the theater, and I went back time and again for those three.”

Brown said his high school speech and debate coach Larry England had an influence on his life and career.

“Larry pushed me to achieve,” Brown said. “During my time here

on this campus, I learned to push myself. I opened myself up to a bigger world and challenged myself ... and the world rewarded me.”

Despite attending Murray State, Brown said he never completed his education.

“I spent five years here, I got a diploma, but I did not complete my education because true education never ends,” Brown said. “Every day offers something new to learn, something new to explore, and that I learned right here, so I guess you could say Murray State is where my education began.”

Brown's interest in acting began in an introductory English class at Murray State, where his professor talked about improvisational theater.

see **PRESIDENTIAL LECTURE**, page 3

Board of Regents spotlights Rifle's wins

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The Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution presenting the Racer rifle team with a plaque of acknowledgement and appreciation after the team qualified for its 35th NCAA tournament.

Beyond highlighting rifle's achievements, the Regents discussed campus construction plans, updates to murraystate.edu and enrollment rates for underrepresented minorities.

Rifle was commemorated for its 17th OVC Championship win. Athletic Director Nico Yantko further recognized Head Coach Alan Lollar's success: in 2022, he was named OVC Rifle Coach of the Year for the eighth time.

Yantko also highlighted members of the rifle team. Yantko recognized senior Matias Kiuru for being named OVC Smallbore Athlete of the Year for the fourth consecutive year, junior Allison Henry for being OVC Air Rifle Athlete of the Year and freshman Paolo Paravati for being OVC Freshman Athlete of the Year.

Junior Scott Patterson and sophomore John Blanton, along with Kiuru and Henry, were named to the All-OVC first team. Paravati



Dionte Berry/The News

Athletic Director Nico Yantko presents the rifle team with awards at a Board of Regents meeting on Feb. 24.

was named to the All-OVC second team and All-OVC Newcomer.

Before the achievements of the rifle team were highlighted, newly appointed Regent Brandon Edmiston was sworn in to kick off the meeting.

Calloway County Judge Executive Kenny Imes appointed Edmiston, a self-employed Murray businessman at Edmiston Holdings.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee highlighted what construction projects will be coming to a close and what is set to start soon.

Vice President of Finance Jackie Dudley offered a brief insight into the P3 housing project, which should have broken ground at the beginning of the spring semester but hasn't because of inflation.

“As far as moving forward one of our issues was the cost of debt,” Dudley said. “Those [debts] may [tick] up some, and we won't see a downturn until the fourth quarter of this calendar year.”

see **BOARD OF REGENTS**, page 3

SGA gains visibility with Curris Center move

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The Center for Student Involvement moved into a new office, which is smaller, but more visible to students due to its new location on the second floor where the post office was previously located.

The office changed as part of the spring renovations in the Curris Center, the new space is more segmented, allowing for more offices within the space.

This office holds the Student Government Association, the Office of Student Organizations and the Office of Greek Life.

Junior Ellie McGowan, Student Government Association president, said the staff loves the new office.

"I think, overall, this is a much better setup for all of our different organizations and all the different branches who serve out of this office," McGowan said. "It gives us our own space to be able to have meetings and things, but also at the same time, we do have a common area ... and we are more than able to connect with each other."

Jeanie Morgan is the adviser to SGA and works with Student Organizations. She said the new office space is more visible to the student body than it was on the first floor of the Curris Center.

"One of the things was to move us into a more high visibility area, which we are, so I really like it here," Morgan said. "We haven't been here long enough to really get our things on the walls or what we want. It's not completed yet, but I'm really excited about being in this location."

Kade Gambill, Student Organizations coordinator, also mentioned the higher visibility of the new office.

"Now, we're right up front on the second floor," Gambill said. "I'd say the majority of students come to the Career Center to eat so they got to



Abbie Michalek/The News

The Center for Student Involvement office moves to the second floor of the Curris Center as renovations continue throughout the building

walk right past us. Some students have already walked in that didn't even know what we were and just wanted to see what was going on, so that was great to kind of get some new exposure to the student body."

Although the building has held up well over the years, Morgan said she thought it was time for renovations in the Curris Center. She said she has been working in the Curris Center since 1984, just a few years after it was built.

"There hasn't been a lot done to the building, and when it was built, it was just one of those showcases, and we would have people come from different states to look at the Curris Center," Morgan said. "We were very, very modern at the time, and the building has held up really really well. It gets so much use, and it was time for an overhaul."

As the new office is smaller than their old office on the first floor office. Once Morgan said

they did their best to prepare for the new office and to downsize.

"That was one of the things whenever they started talking about moving our office is we were going to lose a lot of space, and that was a concern," Morgan said. "Because with this many people trying to work in here, it makes it difficult."

The former Thoroughbred Cafe will also be turned into a meeting room to help with the space issue, Morgan said. The office staff will be able to use that meeting room as part of their office, and people will be able to check out the room for meetings through the Student Organizations office.

Gambill also said he prefers the new office.

"I enjoy the update," Gambill said. "It's more modern."

McGowan says she hopes students will stop by the office more now it is more visible.

"We've really enjoyed being able to see more students, and we definitely want to see that continue, so I would definitely encourage any student who has any questions about SGA, or [Residential College Association], registered student organizations, Greek Life — whatever it may be to come stop by and chat with us," McGowan said. "We would love to be able to see more students in this office space."

There are still some small details remains to be finished in the office. Morgan says the name for the office will be put on the door, and some of the office doors will possibly be glazed sometime in the future.

"We plan on having a ribbon cutting, but it's going to begin in the future because, like I said, we want to get everything finished and looking like we want it to be before we do any kind of official ribbon cutting, but we will do that eventually," Morgan said. "We'll get there."

Kentucky Supreme Court upholds abortion ban

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The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled on Feb. 16 to uphold the state's near-total ban on abortion, which includes previously passed trigger laws that went into effect August 2022.

House Bill 148, passed and signed into law in 2019, states abortion will become illegal effective immediately in Kentucky, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

This law does not allow exceptions for cases of rape or incest. However, abortions can be performed if the patient is at risk of death or to prevent disabling injury.

There is no clear answer from Attorney General Daniel Cameron on what is considered life threatening, but in vitro fertilization, miscarriages, pre-eclampsia and ectopic pregnancies would be seen as life threatening. There is also no straightforward indication on what is considered a disabling injury.

Assistant Professor of Political Science Kevin Elliott said the decision to overturn *Roe* can cause a lot of confusion, especially for those who move between states.

"It makes it very difficult for Americans to kind of know what the rules are in any given policy situation," Elliott said. "There are some arguments that it's good to have this kind of variation because it makes things that allow policy to vary with the opinions of the people in different states. On the other hand, it comes with this big sort of cognitive burden on citizens that it becomes very difficult for them to know what the law."

Hutch Williams, a senior political science major, said these



Photo courtesy of AP

Protesters speak against abortion bans at the Kentucky State Capitol in April 2022.

bans will increase the number of unsafe abortions in the state.

"A lot of people in these states where there is a total ban do not realize that abortion in the majority of countries in the world is synonymous to health care," Williams said. "Therefore, without the option of health-sanctioned abortion, birthing peoples will be forced to receive dangerous procedures that could end with the death of a person seeking abortions."

The latest legislative action on abortion is HB 300, which would charge anyone who gets an abortion with homicide.

Despite the bans on abortion, the majority of Kentuckians are in favor of the right to choose.

The League of Women Voters of Kentucky reports 52.3% of individuals voted "no" on Amendment 2 in November 2022, while 47.7% voted "yes." This amendment would have declared there is no constitutional right to an abortion.

While these bans are in place, Elliott said they can help spur people to advocate for their rights.

"They are mobilizing to get their voices heard on this issue where they might have previously thought that this was a settled issue that they didn't need to be overly concerned about," Elliott said. "Going forward, you might actually expect there to be more attention paid to this issue as women mobilize into the political system, as they join groups, as they lobby legislators to try to make them listen to them because abortion has sparked an interest and a concern in them for politics, but their concern might extend beyond abortion."

Many organizations, like the ACLU and League of Women Voters, have advocacy groups in Kentucky that promote certain issues important to women. These organizations aim to increase political engagement and knowledge on a national, state and local level.

The Center of American Progress found banning abortion only increases the number of unsafe abortions and recommends showing commitment to issues like creating a comprehensive sex education course for students, better access to emergency contraception, insurance coverage of and public funding for family planning services and programs that curb domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Williams said legislators should work to update sex education courses and provide students with the information they need in order to practice safe sex.

"They refuse to teach all of us standardized sex education, which could effectively prevent unwanted pregnancies by demonstrating how to use effective birth control, how you could prevent getting a variety of sexually transmitted diseases and creating an open environment to talk about problems relating to sex," Williams said.

The ACLU of Kentucky has since released a statement since the Kentucky Supreme Court decision, saying they were disappointed in the Court's decision but would continue to fight for bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom.

"Once again, the Kentucky Supreme Court failed to protect the health and safety of nearly a million people in the state by refusing to reinstate the lower court order blocking the law," according to the ACLU of Kentucky. "Even after Kentuckians overwhelmingly voted against an anti-abortion ballot measure, abortion remains banned in the state."

Gender Equity Caucus hosts panel discussion

Guests discuss bodily autonomy for International Women's Day

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To mark International Women's Day, the Gender Equity Caucus will host a podcast producer, former Kentucky representative and a community organizer for bodily autonomy in its event on Wednesday, March 8.

The event, *Bodily Autonomy: Women, Resilience and Resistance in the Bluegrass State*, will feature Ariel Lavery, producer of the "Middle of Everywhere" podcast; Attica Scott, a former Kentucky representative; and Charlotte Goddard, community organizer with Planned Parenthood and Alliance Advocates Kentucky.

The event focus came from recent limitations on reproductive rights, said Assistant Professor in English and President of the Gender Equity Caucus Sara Cooper.

"Women have been traditionally limited in this way for many years, so that's why we decided to focus that way," Cooper said. "We wanted to keep it like what are the different ways that women's bodies are kind of restrained, how can folks doing this work kind of help us move toward more freedom and more choice around what we do with our bodies and how we kind of care for our bodies and see for our bodies?"

Panelists will bring a specific level of expertise on certain issues affecting people.

Season 3 of "Middle of Everywhere" focuses on health care access

in rural communities, according to their website Lavery shares stories from everyday people and their experiences accessing health care.

Cooper said the caucus wanted to highlight the activist work happening on a local and state level by bringing in Goddard and Scott.

"[Goddard's] the organizer in our region who was out, especially with amendment [2], knocking on doors, getting folks together, making sure the word was out, giving presentations and doing that work, so we wanted that perspective of someone who was in our community doing this kind of work," Cooper said. "Scott's been really involved in reproductive rights, she ... is really engaged with issues and with [the] community ... beyond just doing that work at the level of legislation."

Each panelist will have 10 minutes to speak, a guided questions session—led by moderator Michelle Panchuk, assistant professor in philosophy—and a Q&A with the audience.

Cooper said the group wanted panelists to share stories to promote awareness on the issues women currently face.

"Panels like this one can increase understanding, give folks an opportunity to ask questions about things that they don't understand and allow the folks who do this work to really kind of bring it to light and say, 'this is what we're facing,'" Cooper said.

Cooper hopes this event will provide a better awareness about reproductive rights and issues impacting women.

Graphic courtesy of the Gender Equity Caucus. Three guests speak about bodily autonomy in light of recent abortion restrictions in Kentucky.

"The biggest thing is hoping that folks come away with a sense of community, feeling like they're a part of a larger conversation, hearing these amazing women speak and hopefully feeling hopeful about how they might kind of move

forward and support the work that folks are doing on these issues," Cooper said.

This panel discussion will be held from 4 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. in 623 Price Doyle Fine Arts. The event is free and open to the public.

BOARD OF REGENTS, from page 1

Facilities Management Director Jason Youngblood and Associate Director Angela Lampe reviewed the following projects in progress:

- Curris Center renovations
- Wrather Hall: boiler and electric
- Lovett Auditorium: HVAC, windows and seating
- Mason Hall renovations
- Pogue Library: HVAC
- Fine Arts Buildings: HVAC
- Price Doyle Fine Arts: interior stairs
- Expo Center: phase 1 of renovations
- Hancock Bio Station: HVAC and design
- CFSB Center: generator

Construction results are already on display on the second floor of the Curris Center with the opening of the Center for Student Involvement, the Sodexo office and bathrooms.

"The Student Government Association has moved into their space [Center for Student Involvement]," Lampe said. "There are still little odds and ends left to complete, but they are in their home, and the storefront has been installed."

On the third floor, which is still closed off, the tile has been replaced by concrete, and Lampe said dry-wall is set to be installed. Over the summer, renovations will be made to the University Store storefront.

Construction in both Lovett Auditorium and Wrather Museum is on its final legs. Wrather is set to reopen in early March, and Lovett will follow, as both still need window installation completed.

Youngblood talked about Mason Hall and the possible home for the new nursing building. The new building is set to be opened by January 2025.

The location of the new building has been narrowed down to the area north of Faculty Hall in between Alexander Hall and Blackburn Science Building, which serves as faculty, staff and student parking.

"We're working with our design team to help us position that building the best



Dionte Berry/The News. Board of Regents members discuss various ongoing construction and renovation projects on campus.

where it'll be a proper balance of visibility and accessibility," Youngblood said.

The grassy area beside Waterfield Library and the former site of Woods Hall and Ordway Hall has been fenced off to make way for the beginning of the construction of Woods Park. For this semester, the underground utilities, draining and lighting are set to be installed.

A part of the first phase of construction is establishing sidewalks and a monument at the corner of 14th and Olive Street.

Over the summer, the pedestrian bridge over Chestnut Street will be completely replaced. Originally meant for the centennial, Youngblood said it wasn't feasible at the time.

The new bridge will have "Murray State" printed on instead of a banner, new railings and lighting that will illuminate the bridge at night.

"The contractors targeted two months to do the work," Youngblood said. "The bridge itself will be closed for a month, then we can open it up for traffic, but the road below will have to be closed for two months."

Enrollment Management and Student Success Committee

The Enrollment Management and Student Success Committee informed the board about Career Pathways, a new element of murraystate.edu that allows students to look into the professional outcomes for their major.

Anyone interested in the career yield of a specific major can go to murraystate.edu/programs and search majors to find information about the types of degrees offered, class sizes and campus location.

Beyond that data, the Career Outlook shows students the numbers of people employed in the field they searched, average salary, the number of job postings and the top occupations in the field by income.

"In the higher ed world we are in today, one of the top questions we get as recruiters from family and students is 'Am I going to be able to get a job, and how much am I going to make?'" President Bob Jackson said. "Hence the development of this and everyone that was involved with the development of this."

Faculty Regent Melony Shemberger said this is an opportunity for programs to reconsider the language they use to describe their discipline because that can affect certain searches for prospective students.

This committee comes after Shemberger's committee, the Academic Excellence and Scholarly Activities Committee, renamed the Department of Community Leadership and Human Services to the Department of Criminal Justice and Social Work.

The committee also presented a diversity, equity and inclusion report, which highlighted campus student, faculty and staff organizations with Black and Indigenous members or members of color. The report also informed regents about the underrepresented minority population (URM) on campus, which has increased 10% in one year.

The Spring Quarterly Board of Regents meeting will be on June 2.

PRESIDENTIAL LECTURE, from page 1

"I was a 'Saturday Night Live' fanatic," Brown said. "I idolized those people, and that's where they all started. He would pull kids up to the stage to do improv, and I desperately wanted to be one of those kids he called, but I didn't throw up my hand, of course."

Though Brown found volunteering too intimidating, he said the class planted a seed for him.

"When I came to sign up for the next semester, I said, 'I'm going to take an acting class,'" Brown said.

On the first day of the class, students introduced themselves by listing their recent productions and achievements. When it was Brown's turn to speak, he told the class he had never been in a play except for an eighth grade class production called "It's Cold in Them Thar Hills." The class laughed in response.

"They laughed at me," Brown said. "Not with me, at me. I eventually became friends with several people who were in that class, but on that day, I was humiliated."

One of the assignments for the class was performing a soliloquy from Shakespeare, with whom Brown said he had little prior experience.

"I chose 'To be, or not to be' from 'Hamlet' because I remembered it from a 'Gilligan's Island' episode," Brown said. "I sat down to read Shakespeare. 'Hamlet' spoke to me. I understood it ... I connected with the longing, the youthful angst and depression of Hamlet."

After receiving a master's degree at DePaul University in Chicago, Brown went on to act in films as diverse as "Scream," "There's Something About Mary" and "Black Mass," among several others. Currently, he plays roles in the TV streaming series "The Mandalorian," "Hacks," "Five Days at Memorial" and "Paul T. Goldman."

He has also appeared in the shows "Preacher," "True Detective" and "Deadwood," among others. In addition to his work in television and film, Brown voiced the supporting character Bill in the video game "The Last of Us," now a hit HBO series.

As a Presidential Lecture speaker, Brown joins the ranks of luminaries like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bill Nye and Admiral William McRaven.

Our view: Drag artists are the new targets of GOP fearmongering

So many issues are plaguing Kentucky during this legislative session. We are experiencing an opioid crisis and a teacher shortage, yet the Kentucky GOP chose to target drag artists instead.

If passed by the Kentucky legislature, Senate Bill 115 would ban all drag shows from taking place within 1,000 feet of schools, walking trails, homes and churches. This would destroy the drag community in the state of Kentucky, as most places that host drag shows fall within 1,000 feet of one of the restricted areas.

Much of the new wave of controversy surrounding drag artists came from a recent viral video taken at a performance called “A Drag Queen Christmas.” The show’s website said although the show was open to all ages, adult content was included in the show. This warning was available to all show attendees, so the drag artists who participated should not take the blame for something outside of their control.

If Republican lawmakers have any issues with the show, they should not target drag artists for an adult’s decision to see a drag show.

We at *The News* believe drag artists are being unfairly targeted by Kentucky politicians. Because of SB 115’s vague wording, the legislation could affect the lives of transgender people. The bill defines drag as gender expression “inconsistent with the biological sex” from a person’s birth certificate. This vague wording could be used to target trans people even though drag is much different from being trans.



Wesley Hammer/*The News*

Similar bills have been introduced in Tennessee and 13 other states. Tennessee’s anti-drag bill is even more restrictive than Kentucky’s SB 115, as it would ban all drag from being viewed by minors completely. We at *The News* believe drag artists are not a danger to anyone and should not be regulated as though they are a danger.

These bills have been criticized as an attack on gender expression by members of the LGBTQ+ community. If passed, Tennessee’s bill would take effect right before Pride Month, when drag artists are a major part of events throughout the month.

Local drag artists in Kentucky and Tennessee have spoken out against

the bill and devastating economic impact the passing of these bills would have on the economies of large nearby cities like Nashville and Louisville.

Drag brunches have grown exponentially popular over the past few years, and Louisville has some of the highest-rated drag brunches in the United States, according to Yelp. Seeing as famous drag brunches like LeMoo and CC’s Kitchen and Louisville fall within 1,000 feet of restricted areas, they would lose their ability to host drag brunches and their valuable tax contributions to the city of Louisville.

Most drag is appropriate for children’s viewing. Drag Queen Story Hour is an event where drag artists

read age-appropriate books to children at schools, libraries and businesses. The drag artists are not there to groom the attending children; they are there to entertain the children and read to them.

These anti-drag bills introduced in multiple states perpetuate a popular right-wing lie members of the LGBTQ+ community are groomers and dangerous to young people, but we at *The News* disagree. Drag artists are no more dangerous than your average person in a Halloween costume or dressed as the Easter Bunny.

Our founding fathers were men in wigs and tights, so why do we have a problem with it now?

Letter to the Editor: Mirror, mirror on the wall

Before Rep. James Comer begins investigating Hunter Biden, he needs to take a good look in the mirror. When he ran for governor in 2015, his college girlfriend came forth with allegations of physical and emotional abuse. She stated whenever Comer thought she did something wrong, the consequences were swift, violent and

the relationship was toxic. The girlfriend’s roommate often saw bruises on her, and her mother reported Comer calling and stating her daughter was going to be killed. This investigation was shut down when Comer and his lawyer threatened devastating lawsuits against papers reporting the story. His lawyer shamed the young lady so much





that she moved out of the state permanently.

Why am I so interested in Comer? He and his sycophant university friend attempted to limit my communication when I harshly yet legally criticized Comer for aggressively defending the most dangerous politician in our country. Clearly, that attempt did not work, and I will

not be bullied by these two men, both poisoned by power. As a Christian, I have zero hatred or bitterness toward each man but little respect for either. Stop bullies before they stop you.

—Roger Michael Weiss
Murray State professor emeritus



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The News strives to be the University community’s source for information. Our goal is to present that information in a fair and unbiased manner and provide a free and open forum for expression and debate.

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BASKETBALL, from page 1

"I mean, what other way would you like to go out?" Burns said. "A thriller in your home with people that you love. We won the game. It was amazing."

Why is the recent win significant? The Racers play against Valparaiso in the first round of Arch Madness. Murray State is looking to make its second straight March Madness appearance after winning the OVC Championship last season.

While the Racers hold both wins over the Beacons this season, they had to get it done in extra time, and despite the Beacons being the 10th seed, they have played better than their record shows.

Burns gave a simple answer on how the team will prepare for the game against Valparaiso.

"Prepare better," Burns said. "More details. That's the bottom line."

The Beacons finished the regular season with a 5-15 record, losing eight of their last 10 games. But four of those losses came in overtime, and only two of their other losses were by 10 or more points.

In their first meeting against the Beacons, the Racers allowed senior forward Ben Krikke to score 31 points. In the second meeting, however, Krikke scored 24 points and fouled out in overtime.

The other player to watch has been fifth year guard Kobe King, who broke the record for most games with double-digit points in MVC history, scoring 10 or more in every single game in the regular season. He



Murray State players huddle around to watch a Senior Night video on the jumbotron following their victory over Valparaiso on Sunday, Feb. 26. *Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News*

had 18 points and four fouls against the Racers in their second meeting.

Head Coach Steve Prohm spoke about the upcoming tournament and how close the games can be. He said most games in the league feel like a 50/50 chance going in.

"In this league, there's a lot of parity," Prohm said. "You have to go 15-5 to have a chance at winning this league. We've had a lot of success against the top teams in the league, but you can flip a coin at times, and that determines the winner. So, we hit Valpo first, but it's anyone's game."

The seventh-seeded Racers take on the 10th-seeded Beacons at 6 p.m. in the Enterprise Center in St. Louis on Thursday.

If the Racers pull out the win,

they will be fortunate to take on the second-seeded Drake Bulldogs.

Drake fell to the second seed after losing to Bradley in the final regular season game, which gave Bradley the first seed in the tournament and the title of Regular Season Champions in the MVC.

The Bulldogs have been led by sophomore guard Tucker DeVries this season. He averages 18.9 points per game and 5.6 rebounds per game and is second on the team in assists and steals. He has all of that while shooting 45% from the field.

In his first game against the Racers, DeVries had just 11 points in 33 minutes of play, grabbing nine rebounds. In his second game, however, he had 32 points and six

rebounds, shooting 10-16 from the field and 6-10 from 3-point range.

His teammate, graduate forward Roman Penn, also has made some noise this season, averaging 12.5 points per game and dishing out the most assists on the team with 158.

Both DeVries and Penn were voted to the All MVC First Team, with DeVries named MVC Player of the Year.

If the Racers defeat the Beacons, they will play the Bulldogs at 6 p.m. on Friday, March 3.

The race to March Madness is on, and it is win or go home in every game. A new team, a new conference and a new chance for the Racers may help them be the Cinderella to this year's big dance.

Softball win 4 at home invitational

Racers earn first shutout of season

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The Racers' record improved to 8-6 on the season after going 4-1 throughout the inaugural Velvet Milkman Invitational.

Ball State University, Miami University, Loyola University Chicago and Bellarmine University all traveled to Murray to compete in the invitational held at Racer Field. This was Murray State's third invitational of the season. Two more will be played before the Racers jump into their conference schedule.

Murray State started the invitational off by facing the Ball State Cardinals on Friday, Feb. 24. The Racers picked up a 4-3 win over the Cardinals in a narrowly contested game.

Ball State got on the board first after a double drove in a runner to give the team a 1-0 lead as the game went into the bottom of the first inning. The Racers were able to respond, though, after three Murray State batters were hit by a pitch in the first inning.

Sophomore infielder Erin Lackey was one of the three batters hit by a pitch. She scored after redshirt junior infielder Lily Fischer was hit by a pitch. Junior utility player Saxon Radcliffe grounded into a double play, but redshirt senior infielder Gracie Osbron was able to score to set the score 2-1 after the first inning.

Ball State was able to tie things up in the second inning after a sacrifice flyout to left field drove in a Cardinal runner coming from third base. The game remained tied 2-2 until the fifth inning, where Fischer hit a double to drive in freshman utility player Adison Hicks and freshman outfielder Bailey Broemmer to give the Racers a 4-2 lead.

The Cardinals scored once more making the final score 4-3 in favor of

the Racers. Ball State had 10 hits to Murray State's four. Redshirt junior pitcher Jenna Veber received the win for the Racers. She struck one batter out in 2.2 innings pitched. Redshirt senior pitcher Hannah James started for the Racers. She struck five batters out and gave up two runs in 4.1 innings pitched.

Fischer had a hit in her two at-bats, driving in three runs. Osbron, Hicks and Broemmer also all had a hit.

The second game of the invitational for Murray State came against the Miami University Redhawks. The Redhawks are back-to-back Mid-American Conference winners, and they showed why they've had success in the game on Friday, Feb. 24.

The Redhawks scored three runs in the first, two runs in the third, three runs in the sixth and four runs in the seventh inning to coast to a 12-3 win over the Racers. Murray State's starter for the matchup, freshman pitcher Bre Haislip, received the loss after allowing four earned runs, five hits, three walks and three strikeouts in 2.2 innings pitched.

Osbron and Hicks had a pair of hits and a run each. Osbron also had an RBI. Lackey recorded a hit and a walk and scored a run. Radcliffe led Murray State in RBIs with three. Racers batters had eight hits, struck out 10 times and left seven batters on base in their loss to the Redhawks.

The Racers faced off against the Ball State Cardinals on Saturday, Feb. 25. The second meeting between the two teams resulted in less scoring. The lone run of the game came after redshirt senior Lindsey Carroll got on base on a fielder's choice in the fourth inning.

Carroll's ability to put the ball in play drove in Osbron, who was on third base at the time, to give the Racers everything they needed. Neither team was able to score after the fourth inning, leading to a 1-0 Racers win.

This was the Racers' first shutout of the season. Haislip received the win, striking out four batters and allowing five hits in 4.1 in-



Senior right hander Hannah James winds up to pitch against Ball State on Friday, Feb. 24. *Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News*

nings pitched. James pitched 2.2 innings, striking out six batters.

Osbron had two hits and a run in three at-bats. Fischer, Carroll, Radcliffe and Broemmer each had a hit in the game. As a team, the Racers had more hits (six) than strikeouts (five).

Murray State's pitching was the story of Saturday, as the team shut out its second opponent of the day. The Racers faced off against Loyola Chicago in their second game of the day.

The only runs scored in the game came in the sixth inning, when junior catcher Taylor Jackson hit a two-run home run. Jackson drove freshman infielder Ailey Schyck in to give the Racers a 2-0 lead.

Jackson's home run ended up being the only runs scored, and Murray State defeated Loyola Chicago 2-0.

Veber pitched all seven innings and received the win for her efforts. She allowed five hits and did not walk a single batter throughout her complete game.

Lackey recorded two hits in the win. Hicks, Osbron, Radcliffe, Carroll, Jackson and Broemmer each had a hit in the game. As a team, the Racers did not strike out once.

The final game of the invitational was on Sunday, Feb.

26 when the Racers faced off against the Bellarmine Knights.

Murray State got on the board first after Osbron drove Hicks in off a double to center field in the third inning. Haislip then hit a double in the fifth inning, driving in three Racers to boost their lead to 4-0. Bellarmine retaliated with a two-run home run in the sixth inning, but the Knights couldn't score enough runs and fell to the Racers 4-2.

Hicks accounted for two of the Racers' four runs as she recorded a hit and a walk after stepping into the batter's box three times. Osbron had two hits in three at-bats, driving in one RBI. Haislip's only at-bat ended up being the difference maker. She finished the game with 3 RBIs.

The Racers will travel to Starkville, Mississippi, to compete in the 2023 Alex Wilcox Memorial Tournament starting on Friday, March 3. Murray State plays Dartmouth University at 10 a.m. on Friday. They will then play Abilene Christian at 5:30 p.m. The Racers will play Dartmouth again at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 4, before playing Mississippi State University at 12:30 p.m. The final game of the tournament will be at 1:20 p.m. on Sunday, March 5.



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Head Coach Rechelle Turner and Assistant Coach Monica Evans honor senior guards Macey Turley and Jordyn Hughes and senior forward Alexis Burpo.

Turley breaks own record in final home game

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Redshirt senior guard Macey Turley made her 46th consecutive free throw, breaking her own record of 45 on senior night when the Racers played the UNI Panthers on Saturday, Feb. 25.

With the last home game of the season comes the annual senior night. The Racers have three seniors departing after this season comes to an end. Turley, redshirt senior forward Alexis Burpo and redshirt senior guard Jordyn Hughes were all acknowledged for their hard work during their collegiate careers.

Murray has watched two of the three seniors from this year grow into the players they are today. Burpo and Turley have played with one another since high school. Turley

and Burpo joked about their playing time together after the game, with Turley asking just how long they'd been together, to which Burpo responded "It feels like forever."

Turley went on to say it's been nothing short of special to play with Burpo for such a long time.

Hughes transferred to Murray State after four seasons at Eastern Illinois University. She played in 109 games before becoming a Racer, bringing experience and a spark to the team. Hughes spoke about her Murray State experience after being an OVC rival for four years.

"From my first day on campus, I could tell this team was special, and this group of girls was special," Hughes said.

Turley plans to work on her master's degree in athletic training at the University of Evansville after she leaves Murray State. Hughes

is finishing her master's in health care. Burpo also plans to finish her master's and begin coaching at either the high school or college level.

Former Murray High School basketball coach and Racers Head Coach Rechelle Turner likely had a role to play in Burpo's decision to start coaching basketball. Turner has coached Burpo and Turley throughout the majority of their playing careers. Both of them spoke about Turner and Assistant Coach Monica Evans' impact on them as both players and people.

"They mean everything," Turley said. "They're like our second moms," Burpo followed. "I couldn't get through anything without them by my side through all of this."

Unfortunately for the Racers, the Panthers were the victors on Saturday, winning the matchup 76-48. Murray State shot 15-57

(26.3%) from the field and turned the ball over 20 times in the loss.

Junior forward Katelyn Young led the Racers in points with 16, with five rebounds and two assists. Junior forward Hannah McKay totaled 8 points, six rebounds and two assists. Turley had 7 points, a rebound, an assist and a steal. Burpo ended with 6 points and seven rebounds. Sophomore guard Cayson Conner had 6 points and four rebounds.

This loss gives the Racers a losing record with two games left on the regular season schedule. Murray State will travel to take on the Valparaiso Beacons, though away games have not been the Racers' strong suit. Tipoff is at 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 2.

After the Racers' road trip, the MVC Tournament begins on Thursday, March 9.

Kent State sweeps Racers in two games

Jakob Milani

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A two-game home series slipped through the Murray State baseball team's fingers as they dropped back-to-back games to Kent State University on Tuesday, Feb. 28, and Wednesday, March 1.

The Racers combined for seven runs over the two games, but had trouble fighting at the plate, striking out a total 27 times in the series against the Golden Flashes' pitching.

Game One

After giving up a pair of walks to start the first inning, freshman left hander Ethan Lyke forced a lineout and a double play to end the top half of the first inning.

Sophomore infielder Carson Garner put the Racers on the board first with a two-run homer in the bottom of the first, bringing junior catcher Taylor Howell across home plate.

Despite the early lead, the Golden Flashes' pitching held the Racers scoreless over the next five innings. In that time, Kent State's offense took over.

Junior designated hitter Aiden Longwell got the scoring started with a single in the top of the third inning, which allowed junior infielder Kyle Jackson to cross home plate.

The scoring continued in the top of the fourth as sophomore

outfielder Jake Casey hit a solo homer to tie the game up. Before the fourth inning came to an end, freshman catcher Brody Williams tacked on another run with a solo home run to left field, putting the Golden Flashes up 3-2.

In the sixth inning, senior second baseman Mack Timbrook hit yet another homer, putting Kent State up 4-2.

The seventh inning came around, and the Racers began to try a comeback, with junior infielder Logan Bland batting a double and allowing graduate outfielder Brennan McCullough to score.

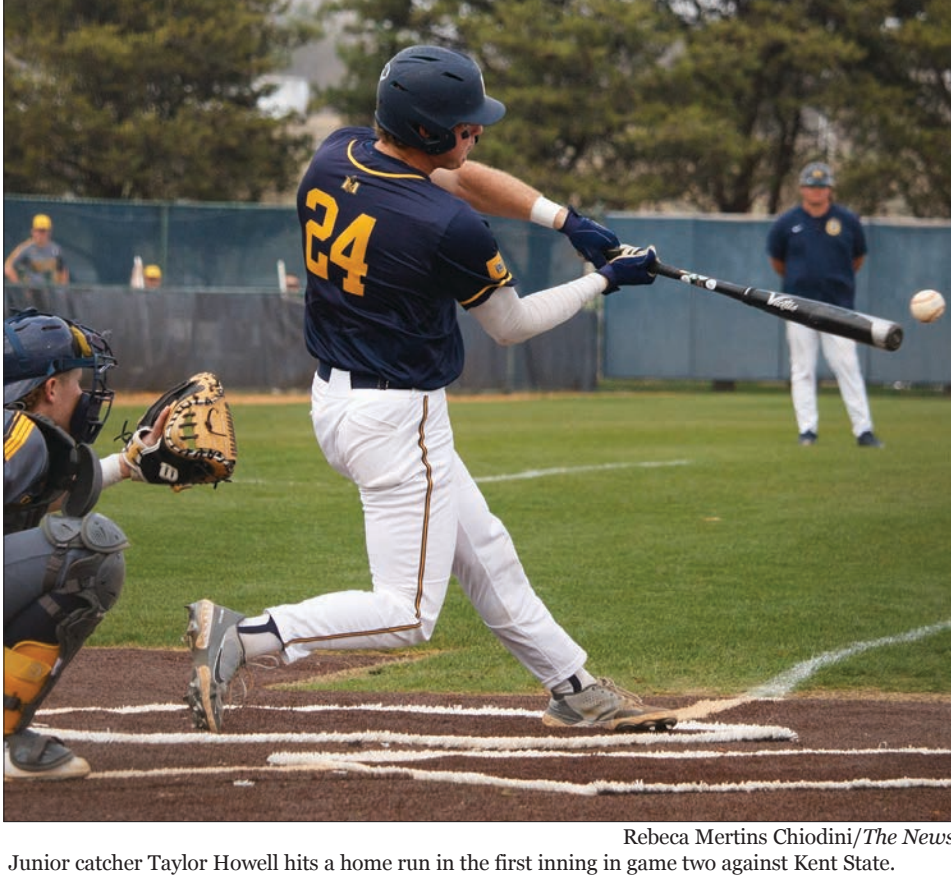
After a solo shot from sophomore outfielder Dustin Mercer in the bottom of the eighth inning, the Racers were tied at 4, and the Golden Flashes were down to three outs.

In the top half of the ninth, Longwell made the Racers pay with a triple that brought in graduate outfielder Colin Matthews to give Kent State a lead. After a single brought Longwell home, the Golden Flashes were up by two runs with the Racers down to their last three outs.

The Racers failed to put anything on the board, though, and Kent State took game one 6-4. Junior right-handed pitcher Nathan Holler took the loss for the Racers after giving up two runs in the ninth.

Game Two

It was a new day for the Racers come game two, and it showed in



Rebeca Mertins Chiodini/The News

Junior catcher Taylor Howell hits a home run in the first inning in game two against Kent State.

the bottom half of the first inning.

Junior outfielder Cade Sammons was the hitting lead off for the Racers and slashed a double out to right field. Two batters later, Howell smashed a two-run home run out to left field, putting the Racers up 2-0 early.

After a scoreless second inning, Kent State went to work in the top of the third.

After drawing a walk to lead off the inning, Jackson scored off a double from Matthews to get the Golden Flashes on the board. Then, Longwell smacked a two-run homer that brought in Jackson, making it 3-2.

Junior infielder Michael McNamara added another run after forcing an overthrow on a steal to third. The overthrow allowed McNamara to cross home plate and put Kent State up 4-2.

In the bottom half of the inning, McCullough stole second, then scored off a throwing error to cut the lead down to one run.

However, the runs stopped coming in on both sides after the fourth inning. Without any late game offense from the Racers, the Golden Flashes swept the series with a 4-3 win in game two.

The Racers struck out 15 times in game two and left nine runners on base. The Golden Flashes struck out just five times in the game and had seven hits, leaving five runners on base.

Murray State dropped to 2-7 on the season so far and 0-3 at home. The Racers host Northern Kentucky University for a three-game series over the weekend, with first pitch for game one set for 3 p.m. on Friday, March 3.

Concert spotlights mallet music, percussionists

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Percussion took the spotlight during the semesterly Mallet Music performance on Wednesday, March 1, with a focus on various genres of music.

Freshman music education major Hannah Pritchett, who is part of the Mallet Music ensemble, gave some insight on the diverse musical styles that were on full display during the performance.

“We’re playing music that ranges from rags to pieces that were originally composed for a guitar ensemble but is being played on marimbas,” she said.

The Mallet Music ensemble is one of many chamber ensembles, which consist of smaller groups, and each covers a specific musical niche. The Mallet Music concert emphasizes the marimba and the vibraphone.

“We’re playing music that ranges from rags to pieces that were originally composed for a guitar ensemble, but is being played on marimbas.”

— Hannah Pritchett, Freshman music education major

This semester, the ensemble consisted of five students, a smaller number compared to past years. Despite this, there are some benefits to the smaller ensemble. Spencer Osbourne, a junior music education major, shared their thoughts on the changes in the rehearsal



Photo courtesy of @murraystatemusic on Instagram
The ‘Mallet Music Concert’ is one of the many musical performances coming this month.

atmosphere.

“While this limits the pieces we can play, I feel like we are a closer knit group than in the past,” Osbourne said. “This means we have more time rehearsing together as a unit and makes us feel closer than in the past. It does mean more work for all of us, though, but I feel like it is worth it.”

Out of all the songs rehearsed by the group, Osbourne highlighted “Adagio.”

“Adagio’ is a slower piece written originally for guitar ensembles, and I play the lead part on this one, meaning I can take some soloistic liberty with it, which is very enjoyable,” Osbourne said.

In preparations for upcoming performances, percussion

ensemble director John Hill is normally the one who selects which pieces will be played. This semester, however, students in the group chose two of the pieces.

The concert opened with Russian composer Dimitri Kabalevsky’s “Galloping Comedians,” a marimba piece described by Pritchett as “adrenaline pumping.”

Hill said “Galloping Comedians” was “followed by a ragtime piece featuring senior Nathan Schulte as the xylophone soloist on ‘Log Cabin Blues.’”

He also mentioned the concert would include the debut of an original piece by ensemble member Kape Metker titled “Contrapuntal Hammers.”

In addition to the aforementioned songs, the group also performed Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Air on the G String” and “House of the Sun.”

At the end of the concert, the ensemble concluded the performance with an original arrangement of F. Henri Klickmann’s 1917 ragtime piece called “Smiles and Chuckles.”

The music department will host a jazz concert at 7:30 p.m. on March 14 in Lovett Auditorium. All types of jazz will be explored, including swing, Latin and rock styles. The bands consist of five saxophones, four to five trumpets, four to five trombones, piano, guitar, bass, drums and Latin percussion.

“‘Adagio’ is a slower piece ... I play the lead part on this one, meaning I get to take some soloistic liberty with it, which is very enjoyable.”

— Spencer Osbourne, junior music education major

The 15th Murray State University Jamey Aebersold Jazz Festival on March 31 will include two middle school jazz bands, one combined middle and high school group, seven high school jazz bands and one visiting college group from Tennessee. The festival will be in the Performing Arts Hall.

Finally, the concert choir and Vox Lumina, a non-auditioned treble choir, will sing at 7:30 p.m. on March 31 at First Presbyterian Church on 1601 Main St.

Connection event brings together local nonprofits

Students can network, find internship opportunities

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In an effort to assist students with finding internships and connecting with nonprofit organizations, the semiannual Nonprofit Connections event returns to the Curris Center Thursday, March 2.

“Nonprofit Connections is a wonderful opportunity for students, faculty, staff and community members to learn about the amazing work happening through the nonprofit organizations in west Kentucky,” says Elise Kieffer, program director and assistant professor for nonprofit leadership studies.

Kieffer says they expect over 30 different nonprofit organizations and around 150 students to attend.

Senior Luke Shultz is coordinating the event. He received an internship with Beyond Uganda at a previous Nonprofit Connections.

Beyond Uganda is a nonprofit organization helping impoverished people in Uganda.

Schultz says while at the



Photo courtesy of murraystate.edu
Members of several western Kentucky nonprofits table at the Fall 2022 Nonprofit Connections event in the Curris Center Ballroom.

event, he fell in love with the mission of Beyond Uganda and developed a relationship with the organization, which led to his internship offer.

“I interned with Beyond Uganda for the summer of 2022 and the fall of 2022,” Shultz says. “I had an amazing experience working with this organization and made so many great connections and learned so much that I can use for the rest of my life.”

One of the returning organizations is Rolling in Faith,

a nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for people with disabilities.

“Nonprofit Connections has been a great resource for identifying partnerships between local organizations and students,” says Hadley Stephens, founder of Rolling in Faith.

Stephens says Rolling in Faith has been honored to participate in Nonprofit Connections in the past and is excited to continue returning.

Another returning organization is Playhouse in the

Park, a nonprofit community theater in Murray.

Lisa Cope, executive director of Playhouse in the Park, said they always look forward to the event because they connect with many students interested in the nonprofit sector and receive many volunteers.

Nonprofit Connections will return in the fall. For more information regarding future events visit the Murray State Nonprofit Leadership Studies page on Facebook.

House plant sale to feature violets, orchids and more

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The Murray State Arboretum is hosting a house plant sale on Friday, March 3, which will feature a wide variety of house plants.

The Arboretum is a public educational garden that opened in 2013 with the intention of providing and displaying a wide collection of local and introduced plants. The Arboretum hosts around three plant sales a year, with house plant sales typically around the beginning of each semester.

Around 20 to 30 different types of plants will be on sale, says Head of the Arboretum Dava Hayden

The sale will showcase a wide range of household plants, including African violets, peace lilies, jade plants, orchids, crotons, amaryllis, succulents and cacti. Some of the featured plants have been growing for over a year, while others were only planted weeks ago.

“Plant collectors will want to be here because there’s going to be so many different varieties that you can’t find anywhere else,” Hayden said.

The Horticulture Club earns all proceeds from the sale. Members then pour the money back into the community, says Hayden.

“I actually just left one of the rehabilitation centers in town because they’re going to be building



The Murray State Arboretum, located on 300 Hickory Dr., is set to host a plant sale featuring an array of household plants on March 3.

Jayden Hayn/The News

the residence a raised garden bed for this summer,” Hayden said.

“**Plant collectors will want to be here because there’s going to be so many different varieties that you can’t find anywhere else.**”

— Dava Hayden, head of the Murray State Arboretum

Some of the plants being sold have been worked with and planted by the students in Hayden’s

Plant Propagation AGR 461 class and her six student workers.

“Sometimes we had some of them in the greenhouse where it was nice and toasty, and then we had some of them outside today pulling weeds and mulching,” Hayden said. “A lot of those students are the ones out here helping me do all of this.”

The Arboretum also is planning a bigger plant sale on April 15, which will have a wider variety of plants, including colorful hanging baskets, flower pots and herb planter perennials.

“I love plant people getting

excited about the different species and having the conversations during the plant sale with other gardeners and plant enthusiasts, but also seeing that these plants are getting new homes and that way we can fill the bench space with other things,” Hayden said. “Makes me pretty happy too because we’ve got a big plant sale that we need more room for so we can get ready for that one in April.”

The house plant sale will be on Friday, March 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Arboretum greenhouse.

Racers Empower brings pet therapy to campus



On Monday, Feb. 27, the Office of Student Engagement and Success hosted an event named ‘Friendship February’ as a part of their monthly Racers Empower event series. Hosted in the Alexander Hall Atrium, the event series is designed to promote mental health and wellness on campus. ‘Friendship February,’ in partnership with the Calloway County Humane Society, also featured pet therapy. Racers Empower will be hosting two more events, ‘Mindful March’ and ‘Active April,’ where students will have another chance to enjoy pet therapy. To learn more about the events, visit the Racers Empower webpage.

Jill Smith/The News

